854 house was still killed and eaten. The cloth came out of the
[432] store of cloth bought when cattle were sold, and kept in the hut of the senior woman of the father's house.

Visit to the mother's home

593 If, as was always the case in earlier days, the mother of the
574 new baby had come from a distant village, she did not see her own mother or her relatives, and they did not see the child until it was several weeks old, and considered by the senior women strong enough to undertake a journey. Then a visit involving much ceremony took place, for the wife's
[604] mother-in-law headed the party. The stiff and formal relations between the two sets of 'in-laws' had been eased slightly through the series of feasts and exchanges which preceded and followed the marriage ceremony. Face-to-face
[571] intercourse was, however, still very formal between the two families, and this first visit with the grandchild was in one sense an act of condescension on the part of the husband's family, since the child belonged to them. It was also a human and natural recognition of the eagerness of the young mother to see her own mother and display her child. Word was sent in advance by a messenger from the husband's village to announce the visit, so that the wife's family could make due preparation.

The main object of this visit was, in the Ngoni phrase, 'to show the child at its mother's home'. The young mother and
[606] baby, with her mother-in-law in the place of honour, sat outside the big house of the girl's father's family. Her father
[431] and his male relatives came to salute the child and to give it
[603] presents of beads, and in modern times small gifts of money as well. If the girl's father owned many cattle, he killed a beast, and they feasted that night, and the visitors carried home meat with them as well as the presents to the child. It was all very formal and correct, except when the young mother escaped for a short time to the circle of her sisters and girlhood friends, and exchanged confidences with them.

3: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1960
FRS Ngoni FRS

round to protect the cow and calf, until they were strong enough to go back to the kraal.

The intricate system of ownership of cattle, including the relation between a house and a herd, and between certain herds and the spirits of former great people, was part of a herd-boy's background knowledge. He listened at the kraal gate to the men discussing questions of ownership. When a decision was taken to kill a beast, or sell one, or to transfer one or more at a marriage, or to hand over a beast in payment of a fine, the senior boys knew which group of beasts in the kraal must be driven out to be looked over in order that a selection could be made by the man concerned.

The Ngoni classified their cattle according to age, sex, colouring, size and shape of horns, whether castrated or not, whether in calf or not. Knowledge of the extensive series of names used for these 'classes' of cattle was part of a herd-boy's A.B.C. By the time he was old enough to be told to drive certain cattle out of the kraal, designated by their class, he knew exactly which ones were meant. He could also use the cattle terminology to be precise in telling an owner about a beast which had strayed or one that had a sore hoof, or one that was giving an exceptionally good or poor flow of milk.

Herd-boys learned that cattle constituted a form of wealth, not only by the numbers a man possessed and could display, but also because they were easily realizable assets. Cattle could be sold to pay taxes, debts and court fines; and to pay men working for an Ngoni owner of cotton or tobacco gardens. They learned also that since cattle could be converted into money, the men of the house owning the cattle could use the money to buy cloth. This cloth, the property of the house, was kept and looked after by the senior women, who would lend it out temporarily to young men wishing to dress up smartly to go courting or go on a visit.

In the modern forms of Nyasaland economy it was a

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national basis to include all the adolescent males in the tribe, whatever their origin. Women were grouped into corresponding regiments. This system broke down after the first World War, when so many young men went away in the fighting. To-day the great exodus is not to war but to work, to the mines of Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere, and the incidence of labour migration is so high that it is not unknown to find a village in which there is no adult male resident. Part of the exodus is seasonal, and many men and women, as well as children, find employment on the tobacco farms of the district and in Fort Jameson Township.

II

The staple crop is maize, of which enough is grown to provide in good years for a small surplus for sale to the tobacco farms and the Administration. Tobacco is not grown by Africans for sale, except within the villages, but vegetables and a little rice and finger millet are sold to Europeans. Cattle are kept in the fly-free areas, and play an important but diminishing part in social life as the means of paying bridewealth, but the sale of cattle is not at present a regular affair. Their principal use is as a form of capital investment that can be called up to meet damages and fines awarded by the Courts.

The population of the tribe is about 60,000, the majority living in the Ngoni and Mbandile Reserves, both near to Fort /5/ Jameson. The remainder live on the tobacco farms or in Fort Jameson Township. Villages vary in size from settlements of three or four huts to large clusters containing up to 500 people. The average size of a village is about thirty huts with a population of 100.

The Ngoni conquerors reckoned descent in the male line, while most of the people whom they conquered and with whom they married traced descent through the mother. To-day for practical purposes, descent is omnilateral, in that any connection through a male or female ancestor can be made use of as the occasion demands.

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IV

353 Inside the house most of the household possessions are kept on the floor. At the back of the hut are the pots of the household, 415 large ten-gallon beer brewing pots, smaller pots for holding the beer when brewed, bowls for drinking beer, wide mouthed pots for washing, small deep pots for cooking porridge and relish, waterpots, ornamented gourds for strong beer, and simple gourd cups for water. With them are also enamel saucepans, basins, mugs, and dishes, and sometimes a kettle. Only the very prosperous have glassware or [61] china crockery.

323 Pottery is made by women only, and it is not a skill that every [414] woman possesses. In a village there are usually one or two women who make pots, while a few women have a reputation for good pottery that attracts customers to them from a wider neighbourhood. [808] Pots are usually sold for money, salt, or in return for bringing twice [415] the amount of clay needed to make the article required. Petrol and paraffin tins as well as enamel and tinware are also used.

For pot making, clay is chosen from an anthill or marsh, and soaked for three days before being kneaded. The pot is made from a coil, and after smoothing it is ornamented. It is burnt for one day, and may be given a dull black colour by being rubbed with the leaves [824] of the mbwabwa tree.

285 Hung on the walls of the hut or lying on the floor are the [553] different baskets owned by the household. Baskets are made by men, [845] and during the dry season when there is much road repair work to be [491] done it is common to see three or four men spending their evenings after work on the road in making baskets. These baskets are often [343] made to order, but the occasional hawker is seen. Large cuboid baskets are used for transporting mealies and grain, shallow baskets of two feet in diameter are used for winnowing flour, and small hemispherical baskets take the place of plates for /B/ porridge. These latter are frequently made in pairs, tied together with a string of beads, so that the second basket acts as a lid for the first and keeps